

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Alcohol and Substance Dependence in the United Arab Emirates: A Scoping Review Protocol
AUTHORS	Fouche, Ansie; Albrithen, Abdulaziz; AlNuaimi, Mariam; Al Riyami, Khoula; Aruldoss, Vinnarasan; Cooper, Krista; Marta, Raquel; Tendam, Prospera

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Carolin Kilian Technische Universität Dresden, Institute of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy
REVIEW RETURNED	19-Jan-2023

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>The authors aim to conduct a scoping review on alcohol and substance dependence in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Given that prevalence of substance abuse and dependence are on the rise in the UAE, such a scoping review is of high relevance. The authors provide a detailed description of their procedures, referring to the PRISMA guidelines for reporting.</p> <p>My main concern is the intertwining of the two different topics that the authors want to address: On the one hand, this review is about covering the scientific literature on ASD based on quantitative and qualitative studies as well as RCTs; on the other hand, political aspects and governmental responses should also be considered. This tremendous scope and the different nature of both topics worry me as to whether this can be adequately covered in one scoping review. I would recommend the authors to focus on one of the two parts or to separate them more clearly. The latter could already be done in the protocol, by differentiating between the two sections more strictly: 1) systematic search on the scientific literature on ASD in the UAE and 2) manual search on government responses and policies. Methodologically, these two topics are to be handled differently and it would be good for the protocol if this were also addressed more carefully.</p> <p>More detailed comments are given in the order in which they appear in the text.</p> <p>Abstract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For all screening and data extraction activities involving multiple researchers, it would be important to know and explicitly indicate whether they will work independently of each other. <p>Strengths and limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The second key point is not fully clear to me: If you include research on governmental responses, do you still base your search
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	<p>solely on empirical studies (as noted in the first key point) or also include a review of legal or media texts? This was not made explicit in the abstract.</p> <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be helpful to give the reader a few examples of how the use and prevalence of alcohol and substance dependence has increased in the UAE in past decades. • I suggest to avoid the term ‘social problem’ (page 4) as it can be stigmatizing. • The objective of this scoping review is not clear to me. While the advantage of a scoping review is that it is mainly focused on a topic rather than a very specific research question, I think this proposal can profit from a clearer scope. It is not clear how both the empirical research question on ASD and the part on governmental responses will be combined in one piece of work. • Please give the date of and search terms used for the preliminary search of ongoing reviews on your topic. I also suggest to take a look at Prospero (https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/). • To be frank, there was already another review, which you also refer to in your protocol. The designation of this one to be the first review ever is therefore not really fair, though the other one was not restricted to the UAE. <p>Methods and analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a reader, it’s not clear to me how you derived at the review questions using the PCC framework. Table 1 gives some idea but it would be helpful, if more details are given in the text. • In Table 1, you indicate that the grey literature search will focus on legislation and policy, however, opinion pieces and narrative literature reviews are included. I do not understand why you are including the second part of the scoping review (legislation/policy). If political aspects are also relevant, the literature search should be expanded clearly and a systematic search should be conducted here as well. This would include more/other databases, other search terms and the inclusion of other types of manuscripts. I am honestly not sure whether you are doing yourself a favor with this second part. • Now, your specific research questions read like the focus is mainly on the second part, i.e. policies. This is, however, not clear from the prior sections of the protocol. • Consider to use MeSH terms in your search strategy; and to provide results of a preliminary search. I consider it to be extremely helpful when planning a review, to test the search strategy in different databases and to check how many articles will be identified. Sometimes, search strategies result in several tens of thousands of articles, which can be limited by selecting more precise search terms. • It’s not clear whether you will also include those articles already covered in the prior review, if they fit this study’s inclusion criteria. • Please provide a list of pre-defined exclusion criteria that will be used in the screening process. • I suggest to quantify the reviewer agreement, e.g. using Cohen’s kappa. <p>In order to have a realistic idea of the specified times, it would be helpful to already have numbers from a preliminary search. Two months for screening and one month for data extraction seems to me to be very ambitious for this huge project.</p> <p>Minor comments:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After introducing abbreviations, please use them throughout the text. Likewise, please introduce abbreviations (e.g. PCC).
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

SECTION IN MANUSCRIPT	COMMENTS BY REVIEWERS:	AUTHOR RESPONSE/ CHANGES MADE & PAGE NUMBER WHERE RECTIFIED/ AMENDED
Abstract:	<p>#R1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The second key point (strengths and limitations) is not fully clear to me: If you include research on governmental responses, do you still base your search solely on empirical studies (as noted in the first key point) or also include a review of legal or media texts? This was not made explicit in the Abstract. <p>#R2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abstract lacks fundamental information of a scoping review, such as clearly stating the research question¹, what the review aims to address, and the minimum eligibility criteria for study inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to governmental response, policy and legislation were omitted (p 1 & 6). • The Abstract was revised to include the review questions, aims and eligibility criteria.
Strengths and limitations:	<p>#Editor(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please revise the 'Strengths and limitations of this study' section of your manuscript (after the Abstract). This section should contain up to five short bullet points, no longer than one sentence each, that relate specifically to the methods. The novelty, aims, results or expected impact of the study should not be summarised here <p>#R1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be frank, there was already another review, which you also refer to in your protocol. The designation of this one to be the first review ever is therefore not really fair, though the other one was not restricted to the UAE. <p>•The second key point is not fully clear to me: If you include research on governmental responses, do you still base your search solely on empirical studies (as noted in the first key point) or also include a review of legal or media texts? This was not made explicit in the Abstract.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The section was revised and included information about the methods (p. 1) • Sentence was revised • Referral to governmental response, policy and legislation were omitted.
Introduction & research setting	<p>#R1•</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be helpful to give the reader a few examples of how the use and prevalence of alcohol and substance dependence have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of a few examples of how the use and prevalence of alcohol and substance dependence has increased in

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	<p>increased in the UAE in past decades. I suggest to avoid the term 'social problem' (page 4) as it can be stigmatising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be frank, there was already another review, which you also refer to in your protocol. The designation of this one to be the first review ever is therefore not really fair, though the other one was not restricted to the UAE. <p>#R2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additionally, the authors mention repeatedly that this is the first scoping review to address these questions, but if the previous systematic review will be considered, it would not be the first review on this topic. 	<p>the UAE included. (p. 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral to social problem omitted (p. 5) Sentence revised Sentence revised
Objectives of scoping review	<p>#R1</p> <p>My main concern is the intertwining of the two different topics that the authors want to address: On the one hand, this review is about covering the scientific literature on ASD based on quantitative and qualitative studies as well as RCTs; on the other hand, political aspects and governmental responses should also be considered. This tremendous scope and the different nature of both topics worry me as to whether this can be adequately covered in one scoping review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would recommend the authors to focus on one of the two parts or to separate them more clearly. The latter could already be done in the protocol, by differentiating between the two sections more strictly: 1) systematic search on the scientific literature on ASD in the UAE and 2) manual search on government responses and policies. Methodologically, these two topics are to be handled differently and it would be good for the protocol if this were also addressed more carefully. The objective of this scoping review is not clear to me. While the advantage of a scoping review is that it is mainly focused on a topic rather than a very specific research question, I think this proposal can profit from a clearer scope. It is not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inclusion of legislation and policy were omitted (p. 1 & 6) The objectives will be 1) systematic search on the scientific literature on ASD in the UAE. (p. 6) Referral to the governmental response was omitted

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	<p>clear how both the empirical research question on ASD and the part on governmental responses will be combined in one piece of work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Review questions and Search strategy	<p>#R1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please give the date of and search terms used for the preliminary search of ongoing reviews on your topic. • I also suggest to take a look at Prospero (https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/). • As a reader, it's not clear to me how you derived at the review questions using the PCC framework. Table 1 gives some idea but it would be helpful, if more details are given in the text. • In Table 1, you indicate that the grey literature search will focus on legislation and policy, however, opinion pieces and narrative literature reviews are included. I do not understand why you are including the second part of the scoping review (legislation/policy). If political aspects are also relevant, the literature search should be expanded clearly and a systematic search should be conducted here as well. This would include more/other databases, other search terms and the inclusion of other types of manuscripts. I am honestly not sure whether you are doing yourself a favor with this second part. • Now, your specific research questions read like the focus is mainly on the second part, i.e. policies. This is, however, not clear from the prior sections of the protocol. • Consider to use MeSH terms in your search strategy; and to provide results of a preliminary search. I consider it to be extremely helpful when planning a review, to test the search strategy in different databases and to check how many articles will be identified. Sometimes, search strategies result in several tens of thousands of articles, which can be limited by selecting more precise search terms. • It's not clear whether you will also include those articles already covered in the prior review, if they 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date and search terms were made more transparent, and results of a preliminary search were included in Table 3 (p 10) • An explanation of how the PCC framework was used to formulate the review questions was included. See Table 1. (P. 6) • Referral to the inclusion of the legislation and policy documents was omitted • Review question were revised. (P. 6) • Mesh terms included and results of a preliminary search included in Table 3 . (p. 10) • The period covered by the review was amended. (p. 9) • A list of pre-defined exclusion criteria used in the screening process is provided. See Table 2. (p. 7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Covidence, the Inter-rater reliability data from the Title and abstract screening stage will be exported

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	<p>fit this study's inclusion criteria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide a list of pre-defined exclusion criteria that will be used in the screening process. • I suggest to quantify the reviewer agreement, e.g. using Cohen's kappa. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to have a realistic idea of the specified times, it would be helpful to already have numbers from a preliminary search. • Two months for screening and one month for data extraction seems to me to be very ambitious for this huge project. <p>#R2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the data collected in this scoping review be the same as the previous systematic review? If not, the date limits would not be appropriate (2001 onwards) as the data would not be the same. • In Page 9, Line 2-The authors mention that four databases will be searched in January 2023, but there are more than four databases mentioned in the text. Not sure if a correction is needed. - In Page 10, Line 42: I am not sure if the authors are referring to the selection process instead of the actual search here 	<p>thee Cohen's Kappa coefficient calculated. (p.11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers from a preliminary search included in table 3. (p. 10). • Periods adjusted to be more realistic. (pp. 9-14). • We reconsidered and decided to include the period covered by the systematic review. (p. 2) • Details about the databases amended. (p. 8) • Corrected -
Screening process	<p>#R1 For all screening and data extraction activities involving multiple researchers, it would be important to know and explicitly indicate whether they will work independently of each other.</p> <p>#R2 . When they say that 4 researchers are needed "to ensure that no studies are missed", I believe they are referring to the selection step, not the search. This information should be moved to the "Screening process" section.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed explanation is given on the work protocol of reviewers – the reviewers will work independently using Covidence, with a third reviewer who will resolve conflict through discussions. (pp. 11-12) • Information was moved to the screening process (p. 11)
Inclusion/exclusion criteria	<p>#Editor Exclusion criteria refer to 'restricted substances' (table 1). Please define what this means.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term removed

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Technical preparation	<p>#R1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After introducing abbreviations, please use them throughout the text. Likewise, please introduce abbreviations (e.g. PCC). <p>#R2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a few minor typos throughout the manuscript; I suggest a revision. Examples are "there a." (Page 8, Line 55) and "an indication s" (Page 8, Line 58). <p>-In Page 9, Line 25:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbreviations revised throughout Typos were corrected